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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/691,089	10/22/2003	Michele Bernini	163-513	4758

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EXAMINER

BRINSON, PATRICK F

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3752

DATE MAILED: 08/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/691,089	Applicant(s) BERNINI, MICHELE	
	Examiner Patrick F. Brinson	Art Unit 3752	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 10 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5-9, 11 and 12 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>3/12/04</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claim 2 recites "cap...comprises a third moulded element able to be coupled, said first element or else said third further element being equipped with a further portion...". It is not clear what is claimed here.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

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(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 4 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 4,531,550 to **Gartner**.

The patent to **Gartner** discloses a plug (32) for use in an air conditioning system, figs 3-5, comprising at least two elements (34) and (36) which are able to be coupled together. A first (34) of the two elements being equipped with a portion (35) with substantially the same diameter as the tube and at least a portion with a smaller diameter (37) suitable for stably receiving a second element (36) to define at least one seat for receiving a sealing ring (38), which is realized with the coupling of the two elements. A portion of the smaller diameter defining a base of the seat, a side surface of the second element (40) and a side surface of the portion (35) having substantially the same diameter as the tube respectively defining the sides of the seat in which the sealing member (38) sits. The portion of the plug with the smaller diameter extends beyond the seat portion and includes attachment means, including threads, as recited in claim 4. The second portion that is coupled to the first element is a ring that includes an upper portion that is the same diameter of the tube, as recited in claim 10.

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4. Claims 1, 4 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by US 3,326,404 by **Gardner**.

The patent to **Gardner** discloses a cap for use in tubular article (13), comprising at least two elements (19) and (10) which are able to be coupled together. A first (19) of the two elements being equipped with a portion with substantially the same diameter as the tube and at least a portion with a smaller diameter (20) suitable for stably receiving a second element (36) to define at least one seat for receiving a sealing ring (18), which is realized with the coupling of the two elements. A portion of the smaller diameter defining a base of the seat, a side surface of the second element (40) and a side surface of the portion (35) having substantially the same diameter as the tube respectively defining the sides of the seat in which the sealing member (18) sits. The portion of the plug with the smaller diameter extends beyond the seat portion and includes attachment means, including threads, as recited in claim 4. The second portion that is coupled to the first element is a ring that includes a portion (16) that is the same diameter of the tube, as recited in claim 10.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over

Gartner.

The patent to **Gartner** does not disclose the material of which the plug is made, however, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the plug of a material having a high surface finish, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as a matter of obvious design choice.

Allowable Subject Matter

6. Claims 5-9, 11 and 12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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7. Claim 2 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, set forth in this Office action and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The patents to Ashcroft, Jackson, Martin '245 and '292, Kaiser, Chen and Trowsdale are pertinent to Applicant's invention in disclosing pipe plug devices including a sealing means between coupled members.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to **Patrick F. Brinson** whose telephone number is (703) 308-0111. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, **Michael Y. Mar** can be reached on (703) 308-2087. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Patrick F. Brinson
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3752

P. F. Brinson
July 30, 2004